



# **MONTGOMERY COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

## **EXTENSION TO 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (DRAFT)**

APRIL 2005

## GENERAL NARRATIVE

### WIA ORGANIZATION

As of July 1, 2002, Montgomery County Government assumed full responsibility for the County's workforce development activities and became the administrative entity for the Montgomery County Area. The County created the Division of Workforce Investment Services (DWIS) to perform day-to-day management of workforce activities. DWIS is a division Montgomery County's Department of Economic Development. The County Executive and economic development director envisioned a natural synergy between workforce and economic development. A year later, we are witnessing the many benefits of marrying the two.

For example, DED is charged with encouraging businesses to come into the county, grow, hire residents and contribute to the local economy. They often do this by providing services and incentives. By collaborating with DWIS staff, the programs associated with workforce development such as MetroTech and Rapid Response are marketed to as valued services. In the next program year, DED and DWIS will continue to create avenues to directly connect workforce and economic development. Division Manager and Workforce Investment Board Director, Eric Seleznow leads the staff which can be contacted in the following manner (organization chart attached).

Eric Seleznow – WIB Director  
240-777-2048 (Office)  
eric.seleznow@montgomerycountymd.gov

Genevieve Albuquerque, Office Services  
Coordinator  
240-777-2007 (Main Number)  
genevieve.albuquerque@montgomerycountymd.gov

Hugh Bailey, Program Manager  
240-777-2048 (Office)  
hugh.bailey@montgomerycountymd.gov

Gaye Barksdale, Senior Financial Specialist  
240-777-2049 (Office)  
gaye.barksdale@montgomerycountymd.gov

Division of Workforce Services  
101 Monroe St., Suite 1500  
Rockville, MD 20850

### TITLE I OPERATIONAL AREAS

#### Collaborative Local Labor Market Plan

Montgomery County has the largest workforce in Maryland with approximately 904,000 residents employed.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the unemployment rate has remained one of the lowest averaging 2.4%.<sup>2</sup> While these numbers seem positive, and for the most part they are, we are seeing a marked increase in the number of dislocated workers. In the first six months of PY 02, the *MontgomeryWorks* One-Stop Career Center served more dislocated

<sup>1</sup> MD Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation – Office of Labor Market Analysis and Information

<sup>2</sup> MD Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation – Office of Labor Market Analysis and Information

customers than in all of PY 01. All the evidence indicates that there are more downsizing and layoffs on the horizon. In the past five months, our Rapid Response efforts have documented more than 200 layoffs in industries ranging from information technology to baking.

There also seems to be business related growth and hiring in high technology areas of biosciences. Low unemployment coupled with layoffs indicates not so much of a labor shortage as there is a skills shortage. Addressing the skills shortage requires a unique approach to meet the needs of all stakeholders in the employment process. Within the context of continuing existing one-stop activities, significant changes fall into the general categories of 1) employer development and 2) training.

Employer development acknowledges that employers and business are one of the most important customers of Montgomery County's workforce development system. Employers drive Montgomery County's economy and define workforce demand. Employers must be engaged more effectively in working across the public and private sectors to solve problems and help meet Montgomery County's workforce development challenges. Instead of the workforce system being thought of as only serving the job seeker, the business community should recognize workforce development as critical vehicle for meeting their workforce related needs. Part of this reorientation will be to raise employers' awareness conveying that the workforce system can meet their needs just as well as those of the job seeker.

#### Local Area Governance

Montgomery County's Workforce Investment Board has adopted as a mission and goal "to lead in creating and maintaining a well prepared, educated, and adaptable workforce to meet the current and future needs of employers." It plans to reach this goal by continuing the positive aspects of previous efforts and by creating new strategies to adjust to the changing labor market.

The Montgomery County WIB is staffed by the staff of the Department of Economic Development's Division of Workforce Investment Services (DWIS). DWIS will continue to provide program and fiscal monitoring to the One-Stop Operator *MontgomeryWorks*. *MontgomeryWorks* provides programmatic reports on a monthly basis along with invoices for costs incurred. Staff conducts quarterly fiscal and program reviews and the Workforce Investment Board engages in a semi-annual review.

Because Montgomery County serves as the administrative entity for the WIA funding, when selecting youth and adult workforce development operators the process must adhere to the County's procurement regulations. Currently, the youth workforce services are available for bid through Request For Proposal. The successful applicant will begin implementation July 1, 2005. The adult services may be competitively bid as early as FY07.

The DWIS staff develops operating budgets for the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board. The staff also assists the WIB as it coordinates workforce investment activities with economic development strategies and business services activities.

#### Youth Council

The Youth Council is a standing committee of the Workforce Investment Board. The Youth Council is comprised of approximately 20 members in education, business and youth programs that convene monthly to facilitate strategic planning, coordinate services and initiatives, leverage resources, provide oversight and evaluation, develop partnerships, and advocate for youth. The primary mission of the Council is to adequately prepare the youth people of Montgomery County to enter the workforce, preferably in a career of their choice.

#### One-Stop System for Service Delivery

Montgomery's two one stops are strategically located in two of the high density employment areas in the County – Wheaton (southern county) and Gaithersburg (northern county). The Wheaton location is the largest facility. The Gaithersburg satellite office is called the Lakeforest One-Stop and is a smaller satellite office located in Lakeforest Mall providing services to upcounty job seekers and businesses. Both locations offer full and comprehensive services.

##### Wheaton Center

11160 (newly re-addressed at 11002) Veirs Mill Road  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902  
Phone: 301-929-6880  
Fax: 301-946-8235

##### Lakeforest Center

Lakeforest Mall  
701 Russell Avenue  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877  
301-519-8253  
301-519-7322

##### Management and Integration

The one-stop centers continue to be co-managed since October, 2000 by the founding consortium of the Career Transition Center, Inc. and the Maryland Job Service, with oversight provided by the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development through its Division of Workforce Investment Services.

Beginning July 2004, a one-stop integration plan was launched that included a joint full staff retreat held off-campus, and a subsequent all-day team building activity in late August.

An integration management team has been formed to oversee and implement integration. The management team consists of the Directors and Senior Managers of the Maryland Job Service and the Career Transition Center, and the Program Manager for the County's Division of Workforce Services. That management team handles day-to-day integration issues, and is developing a phase-by-phase plan for full consolidation.

Core Services are primarily provided by the Career Transition Center and the Maryland Job Service. Maryland Job Services staffs the resource rooms at the Wheaton location while CTC covers the front desk. The Lakeforest location is exclusively staffed by CTC. WIA Intensive and Training Services are provided by the Career Transition Center. All universal service customers are eligible for a Needs Assessment and referral to a partner agency. Partner services are provided at the one-stop locations by a wide variety of required and optional partner organizations, including those serving people with disabilities, veterans, re-entering offenders, mature workers, and individuals receiving TANF/Food Stamps or participating in housing subsidy programs. Each month, there is a One-Stop Partner meeting allowing partners as well as core and WIA staff to share ideas, resources, and concerns.

Special grants allow the augmentation of services to special populations. The Maryland Customized Employment program is a grant that has allowed the Career Transition Center to hire staff who possess the unique skill in working with the severely disabled. And the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation provide resources for a special offender re-employment program run also by CTC staff.

Montgomery Works has created a special service delivery mechanism that allows job seekers from the Housing Opportunities Commission to connect in a more expeditious and streamlined way with Intensive Services.

Both CTC and MJS have business service staff, providing services to local and regional employers, and are now in the process of developing common measures, common procedures, and common job descriptions in preparation for business services consolidation.

The One-Stop center delivers services in the following sequence to Adults and Dislocated Workers; Registration and Eligibility Determination, Core Services, Intensive Services, Training Services. Core services such as job matching and career exploration are available to all customers, as well as online computer training and selected classes in computers, resume writing, and interview skills. More intensive services include such as case management and career counseling will be provided to WIA-eligible populations who are in need of those services. Training services are provided to job seekers who have exhausted extensive job search efforts and are in need of enhanced or new skills to become competitive in the local labor market.

Individuals who face unique or specific barriers will receive special partner services and/or Intensive Services where expert staff will collaboratively develop a plan to address and overcome barriers as people move toward self and family sustaining employment.

Core Services

Orientations to center  
Pre-registration  
Career guidance  
Access to job search workshops  
Computer classes and lab  
Job matching  
Maryland Workforce Exchange access  
Labor Market Information  
Career Resource Library  
Phones, Fax, Video Library  
Referral to partner agencies and/or to WIA

Intensive Services

Case Management  
Career Counseling  
Testing and Interpretation  
ESL and Remedial Work  
Intensive Workshops  
Intensive Job Search Assistance  
Eligibility Determination  
Barrier Resolution  
Referral to partner agencies  
Follow-up through nine months of employment

Training Services

Customer training plan  
Individual training accounts  
Referral to support programs  
Transportation and Child Care subsidy  
Follow-up for one year after employment

Montgomery Works features five Spanish speaking staff and staff who speak Russian, Armenian and French. The Chinese Cultural Center is an official optional partner who provides Asian language services. Speakers of other languages feel comfortable at Montgomery Works if they need to speak in their own language prior to being referred to ESL services.

Special grants allow the augmentation of services to special populations. The Maryland Customized Employment program is a grant that has allowed the Career Transition Center to hire staff who possess the unique skill in working with the severely disabled. And the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation provide resources for a special offender re-employment program run also by CTC staff.

In general, the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, and individuals with language barriers, will be handled by CTC. Seasonal farm workers, veterans, and information on Unemployment Insurance will be provided by the Maryland Job Service.

An integrated Montgomery Works will provide a seamless sequence of integrated services for all.

Faith-based and community based organizations continue to play a vital role in the Montgomery workforce development system. St. Luke's Church began discussions with Montgomery Works in January 2005 to provide staff training and direct job seeker services to people who exhibit and request a need for psychiatric support during the job search.

## Services

### Adult and Dislocated Workers

The Montgomery County Career Transition Center Inc. (CTC INC.) operates the Adult and Dislocated worker programs. The following explains the Core, Intensive, and Training Services available to Adult and Dislocated Workers at the Wheaton facility.

### Core Services

- Job search assistance
- Eligibility determination
- Job matching and referral
- Career Resource Library
- Local labor market information
- Internet Access
- Phones, Fax, and Copier use
- Computer Lab
- Information on financial aid and Unemployment Insurance
- On-site recruiting office for employers
- Job matching services for employers

### Intensive Services

- Eligibility verification
- Individual career counseling
- Case Management
- Development of an individual employment plan
- Intensive Job Search Workshops
- Pre-vocational or placement services
- Follow-up
- Basic skills and Work History Assessment
- Career Aptitude and Interest Assessment

### Supportive Services

- Pre-screening and testing candidates for employers

## Training Services

Individual Training accounts

Business lead customized training

(see Attachment #1 for a full description on eligibility and preference guidelines)

In addition, other agencies provide services to Adult and Dislocated Workers in the area of mental health, credit counseling, job clubs, and a variety of other topics. Services are provided through the Department of Housing and Community Development, Health and Human Services (HHS), the local Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) - Job Service Office, several youth service agencies, the Housing Opportunities Commission, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Montgomery County Public Schools, and other local community based organizations. The Housing Opportunities Commission has staff who conduct outreach activities in the County's low-income neighborhoods on a regular basis. The One-Stop operator will make access to these programs seamless and reduce duplication of services.

Supportive Services will be provided. Needs based payments will be paid to participants in training based on availability and when such payment is necessary to sustain transportation as noted on the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). (see attached Needs Based, & Most in Need forms) Needs based payments will be based on need and will not exceed \$15.00 per day. The per diem will cover transportation (up to \$5.00 per day) and daycare( up to \$10.00 per day). Transportation or child care assistance from any other source will preclude clients from receiving needs based payments. This policy is outlined on the Needs Based Attendance Form (Attached). Every effort will be made to partner with other agencies to provide wrap-around support services to ensure client success. Access to support services will be made seamless through the use of the Network of Community Resources (NCR). This Internet based resource provides information on over 200 support services offered in Montgomery County. The anticipated State Internet platform will supplement this information along with the staff of the One-Stop. Each One-stop partner will administer the individual eligibility requirements for their funding authority. Each partner will develop a comprehensive fiscal system for disbursement and tracking of payments.

Needs related payments will not be provided unless mandated by National Reserve programs. In these situations we will follow the prescribed policies of the grant.

Individual training accounts will be used by the One-stop center. (Please see attachment #2 for complete policy) The following is a brief review of the process.

Applicant is registered with Job Service

Review of Job Search log and process

Most in need, most likely to benefit (attached)

Support service needs assessment

In-demand occupation review

Automated Approved Vendor list



Suitability of training determination by counselor  
 Employment development plan  
 Customer review and selection of training vendor  
 Approval of Counselor and Operations Manager  
 Follow-up by One-Stop counselor

Montgomery County One-Stop will have a \$3,500 funding cap on training for Adult and Dislocated Workers. The maximum length of training will be one year.

In accordance with the WIA eligibility requirements/guidelines for level of payments defined in the Workforce Investment Act. All eligible applicants will be afforded basic readjustment services.

The area does not plan to use the OJT option. However, if the local WDB decides to incorporate the OJT option at another time the plan will be modified.

The LWIB will maximize customer choice by ensuring that all customers have sufficient information to make solid choices. Customers will only be able to use State approved vendors or schools that have been selected after completing the local pre-award survey. The only exceptions are described earlier in WIFI 11-99. In some cases clients may be required to take aptitude or performance tests. The customer is encouraged to visit multiple schools, study school outcomes, and interview past students. Information on schools completion and placement rates will be provided on the State's Internet platform at each One-Stop site.

The consortium will comply with DLLR Training Provider System described earlier in WIFI 11-99. Additional providers may be added depending on customer need and local labor market Information in accordance with WIFI 11-99. In these instances the local One-Stop operator will use the State approved pre-award survey along with locally determined indicators. These may include site visits, assessing the credentials of teachers and administrators, comparing teacher to student ratios, and completion and placement data. Providers may be dropped for continued poor performance in accordance with WIFI 11-99. We will work closely with the State as the vendor performance system is modified.

The continuum of services in the three tiers of services will ensure all customers receive the most comprehensive package of services available. This system will ensure that all clients receive core services and those with greater needs receive intensive and training services. All core services will be provided on site at the Wheaton One-Stop location.

Self sufficiency will be defined as securing/retaining employment that pays at least 200% of the Federal lower living standard. For dislocated workers self-sufficiency will be determined by a wage of at least 70% of their wage at dislocation. This policy is in compliance with WIFI No. 2-99.

Noune Sekhpossian, Senior Business Services Specialist, is our staff contact who works with the State Dislocated Worker Unit to provide Rapid Response services in our local area.

- Youth served in alternative education programs must receive a high quality education;
- Investments of WIA youth resources must be demand-driven, helping youth acquire the skills needed to be successful in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy;
- Investments should be prioritized to serve youth most in need, including out-of-school youth (and those at risk), youth in foster care or aging out of foster care, offenders, children of incarcerated parents, homeless youth, and migrant and seasonal farmworker youth;
- Youth programs must be performance-based and outcome focused.

Each participant continues to be assessed for basic skills using the TABE assessment instrument and staff work very closely with school personnel to a) assess participants skill level and b) understand the nature of participant's capabilities and limitations. Furthermore, aptitudes and interests are assessed using the Teele Inventory of Multiple Personalities, Myers Briggs Personality Inventory, ONET's Interest, Work Importance & Abilities Profiles. CTC staff also administers its Pre and Post Test Job Readiness and Work Preparedness test as well as gathering general participant demographics, work & academic history, interests and other work related information. The information, gathered through interviews and formal& informal assessments, is used to complete an Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The ISS, completed by the staff in conjunction with the young person, provides a plan to assist with academic and employment success. As appropriate, referrals are made to One-Stop partners and community based organizations.

All young people participate in job readiness training. The training assists youth in developing the necessary skills to obtain and maintain successful employment. The training curriculum includes leadership skill development activities. In addition, MYW staff refers youth to Youth Leadership Montgomery, an intense leadership eight-week seminar series for students interested in exploring the dynamics and challenges of contemporary leaders. Depending on the youth, training can be facilitated one on one with a staff member or as group workshops.

Supportive Services that include needs related payments are not typically provided however; staff does consider each circumstance case by case. Staff works diligently to link clients with appropriate community partners that may be able to provide the needed supportive services.

Further services CTC provides WIA participants include:

- Paid and unpaid work experience
- ESOL services
- Post-Secondary training and Education
- GED preparation
- Leadership development activities
- Adult mentors

- Job shadowing/informational interviews
- Industry specific exploration and training
- Summer employment

CTC partners with a number of alternative schools and programs including the Mark Twain School (serves students identified as severely emotionally disturbed), the Chelsea School (serves students with learning disabilities), Pathways Schools and (serves students identified as with mental health diagnoses).

With direction from the local Workforce Investment Board, CTC has focused its career development and job placement activities in the four local high growth industries: Biotechnology, Sales and Service, Healthcare and Construction.

CTC has developed strategic partnerships with Our House, residential treatment facility for young men, Journey's program (substance abuse treatment facility), and the Montgomery County Conservation Corps, as well as the Montgomery County Circuit Court. Because of the Circuit Court partnership, CTC, along with Montgomery College, meets regularly with representatives from juvenile justice service providers (probation, residential treatment facilities, etc). Additionally, CTC, in partnership with juvenile justice representatives, developed a new community referral form that can be completed by parents, community based organizations, youth, etc. It is available not only as a hard copy but online at [www.montgomeryyouthworks.com](http://www.montgomeryyouthworks.com). The referral form allows CTC staff be well connected with the referral source from the initiation of service—which in turn provides better service to the young person.

CTC staff uses the WIA performance measures as its primary parameters regarding successful service delivery. Moreover, additional annual performance goals are negotiated with Montgomery County's Division of Workforce Services. These include recruitment, assessment and placement goals.

During PY 2003, approximately 60% of its clients were from the above forementioned groups.

Youth must be between the ages of 14-21 residing in Montgomery County. They must meet the criteria for low-income and present one or more of the following barriers to employment:

- i. School Dropout
- ii. Basic Skills Deficient
- iii. Offender
- iv. One or more grade levels behind
- v. Pregnant or parenting
- vi. Possess one or more disabilities, including learning disabilities

#### Customer Flow System

The continuum of services in the three tiers of services will ensure all customers receive

the most comprehensive package of services available. This system will ensure that all clients receive core services and those with greater needs receive intensive and training services. All core services will be provided on site at the Wheaton One-Stop location.

**Determination of need for intensive or training services is explained fully in attachment # 2.**

The following is a brief outline of the continuum of services.

Core Service:

- Orientation to Center
- Orientation seminar to programs and services
- Pre-registration and Universal Access
- Universal service locator
- Job Service Registration
- State Internet Platform
- Career Resource Center Books and Videos
- Computer lab and Internet Access
- Training Vendor List
- Access to Computers, Phones, Fax
- Referral to supportive services

Intensive Services:

- One-on-one needs assessment and EDP
- Eligibility verification
- Registration and enrollment
- Job Search workshops
- Employment Development Plan
- Barrier identification and removal
- Career Counseling/Case Management
- Job Matching and follow-up (12 months)

Training Services:

- Determination of need for training by One-Stop counselor
- Review of Job Search process
- Most in need, most likely to benefit criteria
- Customer researches training vendors
- Suitability determination by counselor
- Approval by One-Stop Operations Manager
- Referral to support services
- Job Matching and follow-up (12 months)

Client flow and outcomes will be tracked through the use of the State's MIS system. Customer satisfaction will be measured through the use of the State's Internet platform and through paper and pencil measures of orientations and workshops. System performance will be measured initially through the State's 17 core performance measures.